

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 24, Fall 2023
April 14, 2024

Members Present:

Pedro Ribeiro (presiding), Anastasia Loiko (clerk), Helena Song, Naidhruv Ananth Iyer, Olivia Thom, Bora Gobekli

Ombuds: Saif Ganni

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of using unauthorized resources on the final exam for an upper-level BIOS course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Student A's exam
- Final exam key
- OIT Canvas Logs
- Correspondence between the Investigator and OIT
- Clarification from the professor on the Canvas logs
- Email correspondence between the student and the professor
- Random samples
- Professor's lecture learning objectives
- Student A's written learning objectives
- Previous exam keys
- Witness account of the incident
- Student A's midterm exams

Plea:

Student A pled "Not In Violation."

Testimony:

Throughout the semester, Student A had been having difficulties with their computer, and that, combined with the student not feeling well, led them to request to take the exam on paper (as opposed to online) later. Student A and the professor scheduled a day to take the exam in-person with the professor present, and the student did not leave the room during the exam and had no access to electronic devices or notes.

Towards the end of the semester, the student's computer crashed, so they borrowed a laptop from their neighbor in order to study for the final and complete work for another class. However, the neighbor had software installed on the laptop that prevented Student A from viewing or downloading any files on Canvas, so the student was only able to access their Google Drive on this computer. They left the Canvas pages open, which potentially triggered the Canvas logs. In order to study for the final exam, Student A

asked a classmate to send them the learning objectives (guided notes to help practice for exams) via FaceTime.

Student A also explained the evidence they submitted, including their notes, filled in learning objectives, and their previous exams. Because the student heavily studied the learning objectives, they noted that the wording on the learning objectives is similar to the wording they used on the final exam. When comparing the student's previous midterms with the final exam, the student pointed out the consistency of their phrasing across all exams. Finally, the student attests to never opening or viewing the exam answer key before taking the exam.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation had not occurred because the Council determined that the student never opened the exam answer key. The Council agreed that the slight similarities between the student's wording on their exam and the key was due to the learning objectives, which had similar wording to the key. The Council noted Student A's extensive study resources, their ability to reasonably explain their study strategies, and their inability to view Canvas over winter break. Lastly, the Canvas log does not show that the student ever viewed the final exam answer key.

Straw Poll #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 0

No: 6

Abstentions: 0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A "Not In Violation" of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 35 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Anastasia Loiko
Clerk